

Creating a Story/Narrative

Step 1 Working Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The working title helps you stay focused on your topic and purpose.• Use this title while you write the draft. Improve it later.• During a test your title shows that you have read and understand the prompt—the directions.
Step 2 Quick Sketch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A quick sketch lets you practice your story.• This is not an art assignment; the sketches help you picture the story to make sure that you have a beginning, middle, and end.• Sketch the events as quickly as you can with details that will help you when you write.• Use it to help you pick a setting, create characters, present a conflict, and plan for an ending.
Step 3 Quick Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jot words and phrases (descriptions, action verbs, details, places, names, feelings, time, weather, and so on.) by all dashes.• This is a second rehearsal; the notes will be helpful when you write; the notes will help you write the story quickly.
Step 4 Interesting Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a strategy for beginning your story; a strategy saves time and improves your work.• Try the Where, When, Action, Character, Comment, or Dialogue strategies.• Try several then pick your best “beginning” sentence.
Step 5 Story Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transitions let your reader know that the scene or the action is changing; they are tools for developing your story.• Transitions often show the start of a new paragraph—a new time or a new place. They are sometimes called signal words.• Make them smooth and interesting; use them to bring events and characters to life.
Step 6 Memorable Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure the reader knows the purpose or point of your story.• Do not use “The End.” Give your readers a reason to think about the story or a reason to remember a character.• Let the ending share a feeling with your reader.

Starting a Story/Narrative

Examples

Where	<p>Beneath our front porch ...</p> <p>Around the corner from where I live ...</p>
When	<p>For the next twelve days ...</p> <p>It was July when ...</p> <p>On Thursday while Jack and his little brothers watched TV ...</p>
Action Verb	<p>I dropped all of the books and then looked up at the librarian.</p> <p>Three children stomped into the principal's office.</p> <p>Noise, lots of noise, drifted out of the school cafeteria.</p>
Introduce a Character	<p>The farmer who lived far out on County Road 9 had several cows, and he named them all.</p> <p>The ant was tired. It had been a long week, so he sat down on the pebble to rest.</p> <p>Matthew Matt is no ordinary pilot.</p>
Interesting Comment	<p>It's not fair. It just isn't.</p> <p>Mom's favorite vase lay in pieces on the kitchen floor. No one accepted the blame.</p> <p>What do you think? Should I just give up?</p>
Dialogue	<p>"That's impossible!" Ned shouted into the phone. "Don't do a thing until I get there."</p> <p>"What's the problem?" his little brother asked.</p> <p>"Nothing, really. Just some more aliens in Grandma's basement," he said as he rushed out the door.</p>

Writing Your Draft of a Story



1. Use your Quick Sketch and your Quick Notes.	Review your plan and your notes—use them for organization.
2. Create variety in your sentences.	Variety in length! Variety in kinds! Variety in the way they start!
3. Include action verbs.	Stories need action. Show action with your verbs. Examples: devoured, hugged, snapped, joined, served, applauded.
4. Indent and start new paragraphs to show action and change.	Stories have lots of paragraphs—short and long. Start a new paragraph when the action changes. When using dialogue, start a new paragraph each time someone different speaks. <i>(continued)</i>

Writing Your Draft of a Story

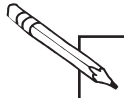
(continued)



5. Use story/narrative transitions effectively.	Use story/narrative transitions “here” and “there” as you begin paragraphs that show a new time or a new place.
6. Develop your story; show what is happening; paint mental pictures.	With words, show the readers what is happening. Use action verbs! Help them see, hear, smell, and sense the action.
7. Bring your characters to life.	Help them feel what the character(s) feel. Don’t just tell what the character is doing (or did), show the action.
8. Use dialogue wisely.	Don’t use dialogue too much. Choose the right places. Have a purpose for the dialogue in your story.
9. Make your ending the best part.	Give your reader a reason to remember the story, its characters, and its message.

As you write your draft . . .

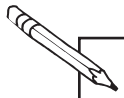
Directions: Read and discuss the following examples. When you write a story, remember to include details, explain, use vivid description, be specific, and appeal to the senses. Look for more examples in other stories.



Include Details

Then one day, while gathering sticks in the woods, the widow's daughter encountered a crabby old dwarf with his beard caught in a half-split tree. The children tried to help, and after tugging away at the beard to no avail, Snow White whipped out her scissors and snipped off the end of the dwarf's beard.

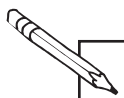
("Snow White and Rose Red")



Explain

In truth, the emperor was somewhat surprised because he always believed the chief minister was a fool, but he didn't say anything. And since he did like the idea of having the whole kingdom admire him at his birthday processions, he had his messengers spread the news that the procession would be the following week, and that he would be wearing the finest clothes in the land.

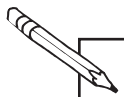
("The Emperor's New Clothes")



Use Vivid Descriptions

The child thought it was a good idea and lingered among the flowers while the wolf ran straight to Grandmother's house.

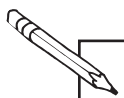
("Little Red Riding Hood")



Be Specific

As punishment for running away, Androcles was sentenced to be thrown to the lion, who was kept without food for three days.

("Androcles and the Lion")



Appeal to the Senses

The Papa asked if he could try. He spread his great wings over the nest and sang, "Sweetest bird child grows and grows . . ." . . . dreamily the chick went back to sleep. Mama cooed happily . . .

("Papa's Lullaby")

*selected from *365 Bedtime Stories*

Writing Dialogue

1. Use quotation marks to show a character's exact words.

"Where is the dog?" asked Jacob.

2. Use a comma, an exclamation point, or a question mark at the end of the character's statement. Notice that the punctuation mark is inside the quotation marks.

"I will look for the dog," said Jacob.

"Let's look for him!" Carlos yelled.

"Where do you think he went?" asked Niko.

3. Begin the character's statement or question with a capital letter.

"The dog ran away," said Niko.

4. If the character's statement is divided, use a small letter to start the second part of the quotation.

"The dog dashed out the door," explained Niko, "and he raced across the yard."

5. If the character makes two or more statements (complete sentences), use a capital letter to begin each sentence.

"I don't want him to get hurt," said Jacob. "Let's go find him."

Writing the Ending to a Story/Narrative

Note a Feeling	<p>Jena's grandparents smiled as she accepted the award. They knew that she was, indeed, a hero.</p> <p>Coach Weston, with his star players, walked proudly across the field to congratulate the winning team.</p>
Remember a Character	<p>Miranda wasn't crazy. She just wanted everyone to know the truth.</p> <p>After the race, Trevor hung his blue ribbon on the wall near his poster of the Olympics and the empty space, which was waiting to hold a gold medal.</p>
Think About the Story	<p>Sometimes you don't have to come in first place to feel like a winner.</p> <p>Jim and Katie smiled as they signed my cast but warned me that our next adventure would take place in a much safer place.</p>
Get the Point	<p>I was never late for Mrs. Polly Thomas's piano lessons again.</p> <p>The boys had learned a thing or two about friendship.</p>

Using Story/Narrative Transitions

Definition/Description: Use story transitions to show that the action is changing; when the character(s) moves to a new place; to connect the events in a story. Add more story transitions to this list.

In between the time
In the meantime
The following day
Some time later
By (four o'clock)
In (the late afternoon)
As soon as
In just (twenty minutes)
Almost as quickly
When (we arrived)
An hour later
Meanwhile
Immediately
Afterward
Hours went by
Right away
After that
At first (I saw)
After (we walked a mile)
Now
Soon
Just then
Just as
Later
Later on
Then
Before (I could)
Before (dark)
Just before (dawn)

While (we studied)
When (we finished)
After (our visit)
At (dinnertime)
Moments later
For a long time
In (the spring)
Late (in the day)
By the time
Before (sunrise)
On (Wednesday)
During (dinner)
While (visiting)
As (it rained)
A short while later
That evening
At the same time
As (we made a plan)
On (Thanksgiving morning)
Quickly
Suddenly
The next day
That night
At dusk
At dawn
A day later
Finally
Never
During the day



Smiley-Face Tricks



- 1. MAGIC THREE:** Three items in a series, separated by commas that create a poetic rhythm or add support for a point, especially when the items have their own modifiers.

"In those woods, I would spend hours ¹**listening** to the wind rustle the leaves, ²**climbing** the trees and spying on nesting birds, and ³**giving** the occasional wild growl to scare away any pink-flowered girls who might be riding their bikes too close to my secret entrance." (*Todd, college freshman*)
- 2. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:** Non-literal comparisons add "spice" to writing and can help paint a more vivid picture for the reader. Include examples of similes, metaphors, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification, symbolism, irony, alliteration, assonance, etc.

"When we first moved into the house on Orchid Street, I didn't like it. My room was hot, cramped, and **stuffy as a train in the middle of the Sahara**. And the **looming skeleton-like gray and white frame** of the place scared me." (*Teri, grade 7*)
- 3. SPECIFIC DETAILS FOR EFFECT:** Add vivid and specific information to your writing to clarify and create word pictures. Use sensory details to help the reader visualize the person, place, thing, or idea that you are describing.

"It's one of those experiences where you want to **call a radio station** and tell your problems to **some guy who calls himself Dr. Myke**, but how isn't more of a doctor than your pet hamster is, one of those experiences where you want to **read a sappy Harlequin novel** and **listen to Barry Manilow** with a box of bonbons as your best friends, one of those experiences where you wouldn't be surprised if someone came up to you and asked **exactly what time yesterday you were born**. Yeah, one of those." (*Heana*)
- 4. REPETITION FOR EFFECT:** Repeat a symbol, sentence starter, important word, etc. to underline its importance.

The veranda is your way only shelter **away from** the sister in bed asleep, **away from** the brother that plays in the tree house in the field, **away from** your chores that await you." (*Leslie*)
- 5. EXPANDED MOMENT:** Take a moment that you would ordinarily speed past, and develop it fully to make your reader take notice.

"But no, I had to go to school. And as I said before, I had to listen to my math teacher preach about numbers and letters and figures...I was tired of hearing her annoying voice lecture about 'a=b divided by x.' I glared at the small black hands on the clock, silently threatening them to go faster. But they didn't listen, I caught myself wishing I were on white sand and looking down at almost transparent pale-blue water with Josh at my side...I don't belong in some dumb math class. I belong on the beach, where I can soak my feet in caressing water and let the wind wander its way through my chestnut-colored hair and sip Dr. Pepper all day long." (*Shelly*)
- 6. HUMOR:** Whenever possible and appropriate, inject a little humor to keep your reader awake.

"He laughed? I'm nothing. I'm the rear end of nothing, and the devil himself smiled at me." (*Andrew*)
- 7. HYPHENATED MODIFIERS:** When you connect two adjectives or adverbs together with a hyphen, it lends an air of originality and sophistication to your writing.

She's got this blond hair, with dark highlights, parted in the middle, down past her shoulders, and straight as a preacher. She's got big green eyes that all guys admire and all girls envy, and this I'm-so-beautiful-and-I-know-it body, you know, like every other super model." (*Hana*)
- 8. FULL-CIRCLE ENDING:** When you include an image or phrase at the beginning of a piece of writing and then mention it again at the end, it gives your piece a sense of closure.

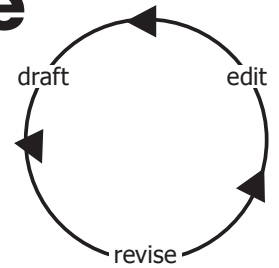
Beginning:

"Hey you, with the **green and neon-orange striped shoelaces, you who always pulled my old frazzled white one in math**. Hey you, who always added your **versions of 'art' to my math problems** for Mrs. Caton's class so that $9 \times 7 = 64$ turned out to be a train with Puffs of smoke and two boxcars and made me get an 83 instead of a 93 since Mrs. C. doesn't count locomotives as correct answers."

Ending:

"Now Justin still sits behind me in **math with his neon-green and orange striped shoelaces and pulls on my old white frazzled ones**. He still **draws zombies on my homework**, but he hasn't dumped another pitcher of Kool-Aid on me - - not yet at least. Oh, and by the way, in case you're wondering, his first words when he opened his eyes were, 'It was James Kenton who hid your clothes and made you walk around in a chicken suit...I'm not that mean.'" (*Liz*)

Revising Your Story/Narrative



1. Remember	your goal is to SHOW, not just TELL, the story.
2. Circle	the "to be" verbs and replace them with action verbs. Change <i>are running</i> to <i>raced</i> ; change <i>was thinking</i> to <i>pondered</i> .
3. Use	sensory detail —words and phrases that help readers see, hear, smell, or feel what is happening in the story. Circle examples of sensory detail in your first draft. Add or improve the sensory detail.
4. Help	your reader picture the setting of the story. Try describing the day, the weather, small animals or objects, buildings, nature, the sky, or some unusual characteristic of the place where your characters live.
5. Add	information or description that will help your readers remember your characters . Bring characters to life by explaining their thoughts and actions.
6. Check	for sentence variety . Highlight the first word or phrase in each sentence. If they look or sound alike, rewrite them, rearranging the sentence structure or making different word choices. Play with the words.
7. Look	at your paragraphs. Stories need short and long paragraphs . Read the story aloud. Ask yourself if more short paragraphs are needed or a few very short paragraphs could be combined into a longer piece.
8. Find	the story transitions that you have used in the first draft. Mark these words. Take time to improve the transitions so that the story flows.
9. Reread	the ending. Is it smooth? Will your reader remember the ending ? How does it connect with the beginning of the story and with the conflict/climax of the story?
10. Improve	your story! You may need to draft, revise, and edit several times.

RADaR

R (Replace)	A (Add)	D and (Delete)	R (Re-order)
Replace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overused words • Weak verbs with strong verbs • Weak adjectives with strong adjectives • Common nouns with proper nouns • “dead” words 	Add: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail • Description • New information • Figurative language • Development • To clarify meaning • To expand ideas 	Delete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnecessary repetitions • Unimportant or irrelevant information • Parts that might belong in another piece of writing 	Re-order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sequence to produce a desired effect • For a more logical order

Sample Generic 4-point Narrative Writing Rubric (Grade 3-8)					
Score	Establishment of Narrative Focus and Organization		Development: Language and Elaboration and Language		Conventions
	Narrative Focus	Organization	Elaboration of Narrative	Language and Vocabulary	
4	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, is clearly focused and maintained throughout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively establishes a setting, narrator and/or characters, and point of view* 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, has an effective plot helping create unity and completeness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective, consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies logical sequence of events from beginning to end effective opening and closure for audience and purpose 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides thorough and effective elaboration using details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective use of a variety of narrative techniques that advance the story or illustrate the experience 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, clearly and effectively expresses experiences or events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language clearly advance the purpose 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, demonstrates a strong command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> few, if any, errors in usage and sentence formation effective and consistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
3	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, is adequately focused and generally maintained throughout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequately establishes a setting, narrator and/or characters, and point of view* 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, has an evident plot helping create a sense of unity and completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies adequate sequence of events from beginning to end adequate opening and closure for audience and purpose 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides adequate elaboration using details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate use of a variety of narrative techniques that generally advance the story or illustrate the experience 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, adequately expresses experiences or events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language generally advance the purpose 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some errors in usage and sentence formation but no systematic pattern of errors is displayed adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
2	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, is somewhat maintained and may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inconsistently establishes a setting, narrator and/or characters, and point of view* 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, has an inconsistent plot, and flaws are evident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inconsistent use of basic transitional strategies with little variety uneven sequence of events from beginning to end opening and closure, if present, are weak weak connection among ideas 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides uneven, cursory elaboration using partial and uneven details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> narrative techniques, if present, are uneven and inconsistent 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, unevenly expresses experiences or events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> partial or weak use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language that may not advance the purpose 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequent errors in usage may obscure meaning inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
1	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, may be maintained but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may be very brief may have a major drift focus may be confusing or ambiguous 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, has little or no discernable plot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> few or no transitional strategies are evident frequent extraneous ideas may intrude 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides minimal elaboration using little or no details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of narrative techniques is minimal, absent, in error, or irrelevant 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses limited language may have little sense of purpose 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, demonstrates a lack of command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> errors are frequent and severe and meaning is often obscured
0	A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to (fill in with any key language from the intended target).				

* Point of view begins in Grade 7

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, April 16, 2012. Reformatted by CIE Services, Clackamas Education Service District